



Importing Personal Property Into The United States

HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS

CUSTOMS REGULATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

Customs Regulations:

Shipments must clear at first port of entry unless arrangements have been made to move shipments in-bound to another port of entry. Used household goods, personal effects and tools of trade/occupation are duty-free, if items have been used for at least one year. Items cannot be sold/given to another person.

COPIES OF THE COMPLETED, SIGNED, AND DATED CUSTOMS FORM 3299 AND SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION WILL BE REQUIRED AT THE PORT OF ENTRY FOR EACH SHIPMENT INTO THE UNITED STATES. THEREFORE, IF YOU ARE MAKING A SEA FREIGHT AND A SEPARATE AIR FREIGHT SHIPMENT, SEPARATE FORMS AND DECLARATIONS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR EACH.

The forms and declarations should be completed prior to the departure of your effects from your origin residence and should preferably be surrendered to the agent that has packed and containerized the effects. The Origin Agent will follow the standing instructions of the International forwarder involved for transmission of the documents to the appropriate seaports or airports in the United States.

“Restricted/Dutiable Items” in shipments will cause significant delays and additional charges which will be billed to the client’s account.

Inbound Shipments - US Customs will no longer clear multiple shipments under one Master Bill.

False statements made to a U.S. Customs Officer are punishable by law.

Customs and Border Patrol issue liquidated damages against importers and carriers for ISF non-compliance.

Possible actions for HHG shipments are stated below:

- a) Complete examination of the shipment
- b) Issuance of a penalty to the importer
- c) Return of the shipment to origin

Required Documents:

- Passport - copy, including biographical data with photo page – some ports require passports of all family members
- Visa – household goods and personal effects may be imported on long-term or temporary/visitor visas (B1/B2)
- Form I-94W – for clients of Visa waiver countries only; web link: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>
- Customs Form 3299 - “Declaration for Free Entry of Unaccompanied Articles”
- Supplemental Declaration “Unaccompanied Personal and Household Effects
- Power of Attorney Form – Authorizing Destination Agent to clear shipments through Customs
- Permanent Resident Card - copy
- Informal Entry – Form 5119-A (if applicable)
- DOT HS-7 – Applicable for importing a vehicle
- EPA Form 3520 – Applicable for importing a vehicle
- Bill of Lading/Air Waybill - copy
- Comprehensive Inventory List – in English, terms “PBO “ (packed by owner) & “Misc”. are not accepted
- Importers Security Filing

Diplomat Status:

Foreign officials who are traveling to the United States on official business must obtain an A visa prior to their entry. They cannot travel on tourist's visas, or visa free under the Visa Waiver Program. U.S. visa law indicates that if a visa applicant is entitled to an A visa as a principal or dependent, he or she must receive an A visa. The exceptions to this rule are extremely limited. Qualified A visa applicants traveling to the United States for assignments of less than 90 days will be issued visas annotated "TDY" (temporary duty).

Required Documents:

- Passport - copy
- Visa – either A-1 or A-2
- Diplomatic Note - Written confirmation by the sending government of the applicant's status. A-3 applicants must also have a diplomatic note to confirm the official status of employers
- A-3 Visa - for staff members of Diplomat
- Form DS-1504 – submitted to the Dept of State at least 10 days prior to arrival of shipment
- Comprehensive inventory list in English

RESTRICTED/DUTIABLE ITEMS

- Plants, seeds & soils – require Import Permit, Plant & Plant Product Form
- Meats, meat byproducts, fruits & vegetables
- Game & hunting trophies
- Gold, textiles & clothing
- Painting of nominal value can be shipped w/HHG's
- Antiques – must be 100 yrs old to be labeled as antique, invoices if possible, duty free
- Artifacts – consult destination agent and origin country for regulations based on item age & type
- Medications
- Biologic materials of public health or veterinary importance
- Alcohol

*Shipping alcoholic beverages in household goods shipments is discouraged as only some states allow the importation of alcohol. If alcohol is in the shipment it must clearly marked on the inventory, loaded by the door for easy inspection. Inventory must list name, quantity, size, alcoholic content, date purchased and value of each bottle. **Alcohol Control Boards by state:** http://www.ttb.gov/wine/control_board.shtml

PROHIBITED ITEMS

- Narcotics/illegal drugs of any kind – Violations result in severe penalties
- Cuban cigars – Brought from any country, violations result in severe fines & penalties
- Items from embargoed countries – a license required from Office of Foreign Assets Control
- Flavored cigarettes, including clove types
- Foodstuff including liquor filled candy is strictly controlled and subject to inspection and confiscation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- Pornography, obscene materials, unlawful, treasonable and subversive material
- Animals or plants including furs, skins, tusks, shells & wood carvings; Subject to the US Endangered Species Act including cat & dog fur & Haitian animal hide drums
- Pirated books, tapes, CD's, DVD's computer programs etc will be confiscated and destroyed
- Lottery tickets, gaming equipment
- Hazardous materials including fireworks, combustible, corrosive, flammable, toxic or poisonous substances including lithium batteries, and batteries with acid
- Hoverboards
- Explosives, ammunitions, knives, switchblades and heavy or automatic weapons are strictly prohibited:

- Firearms and hunting rifles require a permit, proof of ownership, & registration.
- The types of licenses and certificates vary according to the type of firearm, immigration status of the owner, port of entry and destination.
- If a weapon was originally purchased & owned by the customer in the US, proof & date of sale, registration is required

IMPORTATION OF PETS

Importation of pets is regulated by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), US Public Health Service and US Dept. of Agriculture (USDA). Quarantine is generally not required for cats or dogs. All pets are subject to inspection at ports of entry for evidence of infectious diseases.

Pets being imported into Hawaii are subject to 30 day quarantine.

NOTE: The USDA has restrictions on the importation of breeds utilized for herding livestock unless originating from Canada, Mexico, Central America, and West Indies. These dogs must be inspected and quarantined at port of entry.

Pets coming from a country where screwworm is known to exist must be inspected by a licensed veterinary official within 5 days prior to shipment to the US. The pet must be accompanied with a health certificate attesting the pet is free of screwworm or was found to be infested, treated and quarantined until free of screwworm.

Required Documents:

- Certificate of Vaccination – Original, including rabies, dated more than 30 days, but less than 180 days prior to arrival
- Health Certificate - Issued 5-10 days prior to departure, from a licensed Veterinarian

Birds: Only one or two personally owned pet birds may be brought into the United States.

All pet birds (with certain exceptions for Canadian-origin birds) must be accompanied with a Health Certificate and are subject to a minimum 30 day isolation period at a USDA operated quarantine facility.

Animal Import Centers that contain quarantine facilities for pet birds are located at the following ports: Alaska (transit only); Los Angeles, CA; Miami, FL; Mission, TX (only for abandoned or smuggled birds); New York JFK, NY. An advance reservation must be obtained from the quarantine facility and a deposit of \$40.00USD - must be paid prior to import. Full details should be obtained well in advance of travel from a U.S. consulate.

Warning: *Unauthorized importation of birds can result in seizure.*

Required Documents:

- Health Certificate - Issued 30 days prior to entry, from national government veterinary office
- Import Permit – Obtained from the USDA, VS Form 17-129

Pet birds originally obtained in the U.S.A. and returning to the U.S.A. with the owner are allowed to re-enter without a USDA import permit. The pet bird may be quarantined in the owner's home for the 30-day quarantine period. Poultry including pigeons and doves are NOT considered pets.

IMPORTATION OF VEHICLES

Vehicles are subject to import taxes and duties unless previously exported from the US and customer can supply the Export BOL and can prove that no modifications had been made during stay abroad. All imported vehicles must meet both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of Transportation (DOT) requirements. If required conversions are not performed in the country of origin, Customer must post a bond, typically 50% of the value, in order to have the necessary conversions performed in the US. If conversions are not made the vehicle must be exported or destroyed. All costs for exams, testing or modifications are made payable by the Customer. This includes any vehicle imported that was purchased overseas and does not have US title.

Required Documents:

- Certificate of Title and Registration - must be original
 - Commercial/Purchase Invoice – must be original
 - EPA Form 3520-1
 - Drivers License copy
 - Make, model and year of vehicle must also be provided
 - Type of gasoline the vehicle uses
 - Type of engine (spark or compression ignition)
 - Cylinder capacity
 - Picture of engine and door plates
- Only required for vehicles purchased overseas
that do not have a US title*

NOTES:

Fumigation of Wood Packing Materials: As of July 5, 2006 the United States exercises Full Enforcement on all articles of regulated wood packaging material (WPM) to ISPM 15 standards. Non compliant Regulated WPM will not be allowed entry.

*Canada is exempt from the regulation of the United States.

Importation of Unapproved Medication Exception: The FDA has developed guidance entitled “Coverage of Personal Importations” which sets forth the FDA enforcement priorities with respect to the personal importation of unapproved new drugs by individuals for their personal use. Under this guidance, the FDA may allow an individual entering the United States to import a three month supply of an unapproved drug if all of the following conditions are met:

The intended use of the drug is for a serious condition for which effective treatment may not be available domestically;

1. The drug will not be distributed commercially by the importer;
2. The product is considered not to represent an unreasonable risk;
3. The individual seeking to import the product affirms in writing that the drug is for the patient’s own use and provides the name and address of the doctor licensed in the United States responsible for his or her treatment with the product, or provides evidence that the product is for the continuation of a treatment begun in a foreign country.

For further clarification contact the Drug Enforcement Administration, Office of Diversion Control, International Drug Unit, at **(202) 305-8800**

US Territories: U.S. residents returning from the U.S. possessions of American Samoa, Guam or the U.S. Virgin Islands may apply their personal duty-free exemption to articles acquired in, and sent directly from, these islands

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

US Department of State- http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_2637.html#how

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service: www.aphis.usda.gov

Customs and Border Control: <http://www.cbp.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/imports/>

IATA Travel Centre

The information presented herein is based on customs data available at the time of printing and is frequently subject to change without notice. It is the responsibility of the owner or importer of the household goods to comply with the current customs restrictions, regulations, and duties of the country to which the goods are imported. We strongly advise customers to contact the consulate or embassy of the destination country for the most current information on customs regulations, restrictions and duties for importing household goods, personal effects and vehicles.